

**PLANNING ADVISORY BOARD**  
**Wednesday, March 26, 2008**  
**COOPERATIVE EXTENSION**  
**615 WILLOW AVENUE**

**MINUTES**

**Members Present** – Martha Armstrong, Dick Coogan, Rick Couture, Betty Falcao, John Gutenberger, Dave Herrick, Dooley Kiefer (Associate), Gay Nicholson, Martha Robertson, John Spence, Fred Wilcox, Andy Zepp

**Members Excused** -- Fernando de Aragon, Monika Roth,

**Others Present** – Joan Jurkowich (Planning Dept.), Jeanne Leccese (Planning Dept.), Ed Marx (Commissioner of Planning & PW), Debbie Teeter (Cooperative Extension), Scott Whitham, Kathy Wilsea (Planning Dept.)

**Call to Order** – The meeting was called to order at 9:03 AM by the Chair, Dick Coogan.

**Election of Chair and Vice Chair** – Motion remained on the floor from the meeting of January 23 to re-elect Dick Coogan as Chair and Fernando de Aragon as Vice Chair. There were no nominations from the floor. Passed by voice vote with round of applause.

**Eight-Year Review of Agriculture District 2** – Debbie Teeter reviewed the process that was outlined in the memo provided with the agenda. She said in the past AFPB had been very strict about keeping and adding only parcels that were in active agriculture use. But NYS Dept. of Agriculture & Markets parameters are for viable ag lands, so that parameter was used in the 2008 review, and makes it easier to define 51% of the district land as agriculture. Historically, AFPB has honored requests of landowners to be removed, and all of the requests were provided for municipal review. There was discussion about removal of parcels in the Town of Ulysses, and Debbie said AFPB feels Ulysses planning is supportive of agriculture and AFPB wanted to support the Town's position on the parcels. Martha Robertson sought additional information to be available when the request goes to PDEQ, and how these changes match the town's Comprehensive Plan. If a property is too small to subdivide, she didn't see any reason to remove it from the ag district. Dick acknowledged that water can be hooked up to existing structures under local law. Fred Wilcox moved to recommend approval of the changes sought by AFPB, which was seconded by Rick Couture and passed by vote of 9 yes, 1 no (Robertson).

**Expenditure Request from Capital Reserve Fund for Natural, Scenic & Recreational Resource Protection** – Ed Marx provided some background on the fund, which was established a few years ago with interim parameters, primarily for open space conservation. One project has been funded to date, and the balance is \$56,323. County Legislature action is required for allocations. Andy Zepp outlined the specific proposal for property in the Town of Danby on the Town of Ithaca line with 1,100 feet on Lick Brook. Finger Lakes Land Trust is securing the parcel at market value. Ed said the parcel is in a priority protection area, on the Finger Lakes Trail, and is subject to development pressure. Town boards of Danby and Ithaca gave favorable response to the project. Martha Robertson moved to recommend allocation of \$10,000 from the fund for the project, which was seconded by John Spence and passed by vote of 9 yes, 0 no, 1 abstention (Zepp).

**Committees** – Rural Small Business Loan Fund: Jeanne Leccese provided a handout and reviewed the program. It is for locations outside the urban area (as defined by US Census), with less than five employees, and loans range from \$5,000 to \$25,000. Alternatives Federal Credit Union provides training and underwriting. The Economic Development Revolving Loan program is currently

transferring to TCAD, and some of the members of that oversight committee might be willing to change to this committee. There is a project in the works now at AFCU, so this committee would meet soon to review application and discuss approval. Betty Falcao asked why only one of the loan programs was moving to TCAD. Jeanne and Ed said TCAD has similar economic development loan programs with job creation standards, and this would create a one-stop center for economic development loans. The Rural Small Business Loan Fund is not about job creation – it is based on income guidelines and location, so would not have the same applicants as other programs at TCAD. Current loan recipients are two farms, one furniture maker, and a florist. The new applicant is a photographer. Fred Wilcox asked whose funds are lost if the businesses default. Ed said the fund was created with HUD, Community Development Block Grant, and loan repayment funds. If a business defaults, it affects the amount of funding available to other rural businesses through this fund alone. Dick Coogan appointed John Gutenberger, Rick Couture, and Mike Sigler (as associate) to the committee.

**Biggs B Property Evaluation:** Ed Marx said the County Legislature will need review of options for re-use or sale of Biggs B and the approximately 30 acres of land of the parcel. The building will probably be vacated late in 2009, when the Health Department will move to Brown Road. PDEQ agreed a small PAB committee could provide key factors to the Legislature. They can consider re-use or disposal of the building, and keeping, selling, leasing the larger property, perhaps with some control over future use. Ed wants to prevent upkeep of a vacant building. Scott Whitham, Fred Wilcox (acknowledging a bias), Dave Herrick, Dooley Kiefer, and Martha Armstrong were appointed by the Chair.

**Commissioner's Report** – Ed Marx reported on a recent meeting with the Park Foundation. The Park Foundation is interested in hosting/encouraging/stimulating regional climate initiative to make our area the most sustainable in the United States or northeast and a model for the nation. He spoke of the potential of working toward ambitious goals, and how this interacts with current efforts in the community and the ability of the Park Foundation to get some initial funding for projects that, long-term, pay for themselves. Betty asked for in-depth discussion at a future PAB meeting. Ed also reported that the Route 96 Corridor Study is moving along. Resident surveys have come back, and meetings with focus groups and the public are coming up.

**Announcements** – Betty Falcao distributed information about free income tax preparation at AFCU, and said Lifelong also has tax preparation available. Dooley Kiefer announced that the Chair of the County Legislature has proclaimed Saturday, 3/29 from 8 to 9 PM to be EarthHour 2008. Information is being sent in press releases, and she encouraged everyone to participate by turning off unnecessary lights and appliances during that hour. John Spence said he has been in Albany twice this month to argue against cuts to rural housing programs, which have had essentially the same funding since 1988. The 100 million designated by Spitzer for upstate housing programs looks secure, and could come to communities as increased grant programs. He has been pushing for staff training, which would be especially beneficial if it matches the grant opportunities available. Betty suggested contacting CARDI (Community and & Rural Development Institute).

**Adjournment** – The meeting was adjourned at 10:21 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Wilsea, Secretary  
Tompkins County Planning Department

Minutes adopted by PAB on June 25, 2008.

**Membership:**

Martha Armstrong, Economic Dev.

Dick Coogan, Local Planning (non-urban)

Rick Couture, Education

Fernando deAragon, Transportation

Betty Falcao, Human Services

John Gutenberg, Education

Dave Herrick, Facilities/Infrastructure

Dooley Kiefer, Associate Member

Gay Nicholson, At-Large

Martha Robertson, Planning Committee

Monika Roth, Agriculture

John Spence, Housing

Fred Wilcox, Local Planning (urban)

Andy Zepp, Land Pres./Public Land Mgmt.